

## **Media Contact**

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## **Galveston Park Board Update: November 17, 2020**

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees held its regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17 via livestream. Below is an update of news from the boardroom.

- The Park Board approved spending \$12,500 to hire a facilitator to guide the organization's strategic planning process. Priorities include aligning Board and stakeholder priorities and energizing the management team about institutional aims. Tammy Blount of Washington-based Fired Up! Culture is the professional consultant assigned to the effort. She plans to achieve these goals through a series of facilitated discussions that will review the existing mission, vision, objectives and goals; evaluate current initiatives and recommend appropriate adjustments; develop a team culture and align priorities.
- Last year, the Galveston Park Board commissioned Ohio-based Longwoods International to conduct a survey of Galveston Island residents designed to measure perceptions and attitudes regarding tourism and its impacts on the community. More than 500 responded to the survey. Representatives from the firm presented their findings to the Park Board. According to its findings, most Galveston residents support tourism and believe government is doing a good job at promoting it. Perceived negative impacts of tourism include traffic and congestion and that tourism jobs do not improve quality of life. Residents would like to see more recreational amenities like beach park pavilions and facilities for mobility impaired guests.
- The Park Board has entered into an agreement with the local Surfrider Foundation supporting the non-profit's "Hold on to Your Butts" campaign. The campaign is aimed at eliminating cigarette butt litter pollution. Cigarette butts are among the most littered item in the world and pose a threat to the coastal environment. The Surfrider Foundation in partnership with the Park Board and City of Galveston will install receptacles along the beach to deposit cigarette butts. Together, they will maintain, empty and install more receptacles as needed.
- The Park Board approved funding for two new holiday events: Galveston Tree Decorating Contest and Mardi Gras Float Contest. The Tree Decorating Contest will take place from Dec. 1, 2020 - Jan. 4, 2021. Up to 50 island businesses can enter the contest. The Park Board will provide each entry a live tree, plus \$250 with which they can purchase decorations. Shoppers and visitors may vote on their favorite tree at [www.visitgalveston.com/tree](http://www.visitgalveston.com/tree). The Mardi Gras Float Contest will take place on Dec. 12 and 19. Local Mardi Gras krewes will be invited to decorate their floats in holiday themes. Floats will park at the cruise terminal on Harborside Drive where guests can view them. They can vote for their favorite floats at [www.visitgalveston.com/floatcontest](http://www.visitgalveston.com/floatcontest). Both events are aimed at increasing visitor traffic to the downtown district during the holiday season.
- In 2019 costs to clean and patrol Galveston's beaches totaled \$5,597,007. Recent revenue shortfalls caused by coronavirus quarantine regulations coupled with anticipated shifts in vacation patterns are expected to negatively impact funding streams for those services. At the same time, coastal communities stand to see increased levels of visitation during the pandemic that will place undue cost burdens on those communities. The Park Board approved seeking additional funding sources for beach cleaning and beach patrol. These include requesting a larger allocation from the Open Beaches Act that mandates coastal

communities clean and maintain beaches for the public, create more paid access points along the beaches and develop a “Friends of Galveston” sponsorship or loyalty program.

**About the Park Board of Trustees**

The Park Board of Trustees oversees beach maintenance and tourism development on Galveston Island, including operations for beach cleaning, the Galveston Island Beach Patrol and the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. For more information on the Park Board of Trustees, please visit [www.galvestonparkboard.org](http://www.galvestonparkboard.org).